

**Montana Department of Military Affairs
Disaster & Emergency Services Division
State Emergency Coordination Center**

1900 Williams Street - P.O. Box 4789
Helena, MT 59604-4789
Telephone: (406) 841-3911 Fax: (406) 841-3965

Situation Report for August 7, 2003 (issued @ 14:00 hrs.)

Wildfires of 2003

Attention * - New information shown in today's report displayed in ***Bold Italics*** type.

I. - Background Information:

• ***Initial Attack Activity has been considered very successful throughout the Northern Rockies during the 2003 Fire Season. There were 155 new starts on Wednesday with only 18 unable to be controlled. Due to storms moving through Montana over the next few days, new starts are expected to occur. A season ending weather event is not predicted to occur until the end of September or first part of October. A vigilant fire watch is expected to continue as a result of these predictions. Current concerns include the continued management of fires within the Flathead Area Command as well as the Slims and Black Frog Complex fires. In addition, the Deep Fire, located near I-15 a few miles south of the Montana state line on the Idaho/Montana border, reached 23,000 acres last night due to gusty winds that continue to push it through grass, sagebrush, and pockets of timber. Two fire engines from the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest were dispatched to help at the Deep fire and authorities in Montana continue to track its progress.***

II. - Current Montana Fire Conditions: (as reported to NRCC ***August 6, 2003 (2115)***)

Northern Rockies Preparedness Level = 5

National Preparedness Level = 4

Heavy initial attack – 155 new fires for 418 acres

- ***Flathead Area Command (Mann) is managing the large fires on the Flathead National Forest, Kootenai National Forest and Glacier National Park.***
 - ***Wedge Canyon – Type 1 Incident Management Team (Bennett), 25,723 acres, 50% contained, 20 miles E of Eureka, Montana.***
 - ***Robert – Type 1 Incident Management Team (Ferguson), 23,950 acres, 55% contained, 8 miles N of Columbia Falls, Montana. Decrease in acreage due to more accurate mapping.***
 - ***Trapper Creek Complex – Type 1 Incident Management Team (Raley). Complex is 20,540 acres, 50% contained. This Complex is made up of the Trapper Creek (15,910 acres – 50% contained), Paul Bunyan (300 acres – 100% contained), Wolf Gun (4,330 acres – 40% contained) and Trout (1/4 acre – 100% contained) fires located 45 statute miles NE of Kalispell, Montana.***

- *Little Salmon Creek Complex – This 14,300 acre lightning caused Wildland Fire Use complex is located 47 miles SE of Kalispell, Montana in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. This complex, made up of the Pagoda (125 acres) and the Little Salmon (14,175 acres), is being managed to accomplish resource objectives. Rath's Fire Use Management Team will assume command Wednesday, 8/6.*
- *Slims – Type 1 Incident Management Team (Mortier), 8,920 acres, 35% contained, 35 nautical miles E of Grangeville, Idaho.*
- *Black Frog Complex - This Complex is made up of the Blackwall fire (4,515 acres), located 32 miles N of Salmon, Idaho and Frog Pond (2,082 acres), as well as numerous concentrations of spots on both fires for a total of 7,275 acres located 34 miles S of Hamilton, Montana.*

STATE FORECAST FOR MONTANA
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE GREAT FALLS MT
402 AM MDT THU AUG 7 2003

WEST OF THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

Today - Partly Cloudy. Scattered Showers And Thunderstorms...Mainly This Afternoon. Some Storms May Be Strong With Gusty Winds And Hail. Highs 80 To 90.

Tonight - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms. Some Storms May Be Strong With Gusty Winds And Hail. Lows 46 To 56.

Friday - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms. Highs 83 To 93.

CENTRAL MONTANA

Today - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms. Mainly In The Afternoon. Some Showers And Thunderstorms May Be Severe. Highs In The Lower 80s To Lower 90s.

Tonight - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms In The Evening Then Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms After Midnight. Some Showers And Thunderstorms May Be Severe. Lows In The 50s.

Friday - Partly Cloudy. Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms In The Morning Then Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms With Gusty Winds And Hail In The Afternoon. Highs In The Lower 80s To Lower 90s.

SOUTHWEST MONTANA

Today - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Afternoon Showers And Thunderstorms. Highs In The Mid 70s To Mid 80s.

Tonight - Mostly Clear. Lows In The Upper 40s To Lower 50s.

Friday - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms In The Afternoon. Highs In The Mid 70s To Lower 90s.

EASTERN AND SOUTHERN MONTANA

Today - Partly Cloudy. A Chance Of Thunderstorms Northeast This Morning. A Chance Of Thunderstorms Southwest This Afternoon. A Few Storms This Afternoon May Have

Strong Gusty Winds. Highs In The 90s To Around 100.
Tonight - Partly Cloudy With A A Chance Of Thunderstorms. A Few Storms May Be Severe Northeast. Lows In The Mid 50s To Mid 60s.
Friday - Partly Cloudy. A Chance Of Thunderstorms. Highs In The 90s To Around 100.

III. - Summary of Actions being taken by Local Government Officials:

Local government resources from various jurisdictions have been actively engaged in fire fighting efforts, particularly during the past several days. The evacuation of residents whose properties have been threatened have been conducted as required.

<u>Local Emergency and Disaster Declarations</u>		<u>Date Filed</u>
Cascade County	Emergency Declaration (Box Canyon/Long Mtn.)	7/15/03
Garfield County	Disaster Declaration (Missouri Breaks)	7/15/03
Beaverhead County	Emergency Resolution (multiple fires)	7/17/03
Ravalli County	Emergency Declaration (Big Creek)	7/20/03
Flathead County	Emergency Declaration (Wedge Canyon)	7/21/03
Sanders County	Resolution (Stage II Fire Restrictions)	7/29/03
Fallon County	Resolution (Stage I Fire Restrictions)	8/04/03
CSKT Flathead	Resolution (Tribal/Forest/Range Closure)	8/04/03
<i>Blaine County</i>	<i>Emergency Declaration (150 acre fire)</i>	<i>8/06/03</i>

IV. - Summary of State Activities and Resources Committed:

State, Local and Tribal Declarations:

On 7/18/03, Governor Judy Martz signed an Executive Order (# 14-03) in which she declared a statewide emergency thereby enabling mobilization of state resources (including the Montana National Guard) should they be needed to help protect the life, health and/or property of Montana's citizens.

The Flathead County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution on August 4th, 2003 stating that because the weather forecasts indicated no relief from the dry conditions and fires continued in the county it was "resolved that stage II fire restrictions on all State forested lands and all private forested lands open to the public" will be in effect until otherwise stated.

On 8/07/03, Governor Judy Martz signed Executive Order (# 16-03) in which she declared a statewide disaster thereby enabling mobilization of state resources (including the Montana National Guard) as they are needed to help protect the life, health and/or property of Montana's citizens.

FEMA Declarations:

FEMA Fire Management Assistance Declaration approved on July 23rd, 2003 for Missouri Breaks Complex fire.

FEMA Fire Management Assistance Declaration approved on July 25th, 2003 for

Flathead County's Wedge Canyon and Roberts fires.

Requests for State Assistance:

- The Montana National Guard is assisting "initial attack" fire suppression operations by supplying 3 UH-60 (Blackhawk) Helicopters modules and one UH-1 Helicopter module and approximately 45 soldiers. One Blackhawk helicopter module is currently assigned to the Flathead Interagency Dispatch Center, another is assigned to the Helena Interagency Dispatch Center, and the third is assigned to Missoula. The UH-1 helicopter module is currently deployed to Billings. The Montana National Guard Personnel Resources currently allocated to wild land fire suppression duties stands at 51. The National Guard will be rotating in new air crews in Helena and Kalispell this weekend.
- One NG Liaison Officer has been assigned to the Northern Rockies Coordination Center (NGCC) in Missoula.
- MT Highway Patrol and MT Department of Transportation are supporting fire efforts with local jurisdictions and fire management to limit travel disturbances.

Status of State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC)

- Montana DES is providing support to local governments through the State Emergency Coordination Center in Helena. The SECC is currently operating at Activation Level III. Level III operations include a full staff 0800-1700 during weekdays with a duty officer on call after hours. Weekend operations will be staffed at Level II from 0800-1700 unless it becomes necessary to advance to a higher activation level.

The State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC) will continue to monitor conditions and is prepared to provide 24-hour incident support to local governments. After office hours (i.e., 1700-0700) support is available through the DES Duty Officer who may be reached at (406) 841-3911.

Addendums to Situation Report

As of: **August 7th, 2003**

Road Closures: Information is current as of 08-06-03

Southwest

U.S. 93 is now open 24 hours a day with no restrictions over Lost Trail Pass. Still closed are all trails between the Gibbonsville road and Highway 43, trailheads at Cabinet and Richardson creeks, the Anderson Mountain road, and the May Creek campground. The Idaho side of the Gibbonsville road, from the Montana line to Gibbonsville, Idaho, has reopened. The entire route is now open between Montana and Idaho.

Northwest

More than 75% of Glacier National Park is OPEN. Access is available by U.S. Highways 2, 49, 89, and the historic Going to the Sun Road from St. Mary to Logan Pass. The Inside North Fork Road (north and south of Polebridge) is open from Fish Creek to Big Prairie, just north of Polebridge, but is closed from Big Prairie north. The Going-to-the-Sun Road is open from Avalanche to Logan Pass between the hours of 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. only. No stopping is allowed from Avalanche to Logan Pass. 24-hour travel on the Going-to-the-Sun Road is permitted between St. Mary and Logan Pass only. Apgar

Village in the Lake McDonald Valley, Many Glacier, St. Mary, Two Medicine, Goat Haunt, and the backcountry area of the Belly River are open. Due to the Wedge Canyon Fire, The North Fork area of Glacier National Park is closed to visitor use at this time.

Reported Major Fire Activity: **Report Date: August 7th, 2003**

Wedge Canyon:

<i>Residences threatened: 50</i>	<i>Commercial Property: 7</i>	<i>Outbuildings/Other: 29</i>
<i>Estimated Cost: \$14,200,000</i>	<i>% contained: 50%</i>	

Roberts Fire:

<i>Residences threatened: 0</i>	<i>Commercial Property: 3</i>	<i>Outbuildings/Other: 8</i>
<i>Estimated Cost: \$9,011,000</i>	<i>% contained: 55%</i>	

Trapper Creek Complex:

<i>Residences threatened: 0</i>	<i>Commercial Property: 3</i>	<i>Outbuildings/Other: 8</i>
<i>Estimated Cost: \$2,700 ,000</i>	<i>% contained: 50%</i>	

Little Salmon Complex:

<i>Residences threatened: 6</i>	<i>Commercial Property: 0</i>	<i>Outbuildings/Other: 12</i>
<i>Estimated Cost: \$264,797</i>	<i>% contained: NR%</i>	

Black Frog Complex:

<i>Residences threatened: 0</i>	<i>Commercial Property: 0</i>	<i>Outbuildings/Other: 0</i>
<i>Estimated Cost: \$9,100 ,000</i>	<i>% contained: 90%</i>	

Big Creek

<i>Residences threatened: 0</i>	<i>Commercial Property: 0</i>	<i>Outbuildings/Other: 0</i>
<i>Estimated Cost: 4,043,200</i>	<i>% contained: 90%</i>	

Fire Restrictions and Closures

<u>Zone</u>	<u>Restrictions</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>
Northwestern Zone	Stage II Restrictions	July 28, 2003
Southwestern Zone	Stage II Restrictions	July 28, 2003
Central Montana Zone	Stage II Restrictions	July 28, 2003
South Central Zone	Stage II Restrictions	July 28, 2003
Eastern Montana Zone		
	<u>Stage I Restrictions (Billings)</u>	July 18, 2003
	<u>Stage II Restrictions</u>	
	State & Private: Carbon, Stillwater, Treasure, Sweet Grass, Mussellshell	July 25, 2003
	Federal: Carbon, Stillwater, Treasure, Sweet Grass, Mussellshell	July 18, 2003
	<u>Stage I Restrictions (Lewistown)</u>	July 21, 2003
	<u>Stage II Restrictions</u>	
	State & Private: Hill, Chouteau, Judith Basin, Petroleum, Blaine, Phillips, Valley, Roosevelt, Sheridan, Fergus, Golden Valley, Daniels	July 21, 2003
	Federal: Chouteau, Fergus, Judith Basin, Wheatland	July 25, 2003
	<u>Stage I Restrictions (Miles City)</u>	August 04, 2003
	<i>State & Private: Richland, Dawson, Wibaux, Prairie, Fallon, McCone, Garfield, Custer, Powder River, Carter, and Rosebud</i>	
	<i>Federal: Richland, Dawson, Wibaux, Prairie, Fallon, McCone, Garfield, Custer, Powder River, Carter, and Rosebud counties</i>	

General Fire Information and Severity to Date

- Plum Creek has closed all private and public use on their holdings, logging operations are also shut down
- Currently there are no overnight facilities at Apgar or West Glacier.
- Large Season ending storm not expected until mid-September or early October.
- Closures are likely to remain in effect for the remainder of the season.
- Energy Release Component
 - Lincoln Ranger District reports component same as 1988 when the Canyon Creek Fire started
 - Helena reports component is 14 points higher than when the Cave Gulch Fire started in 2000
- NW Area command
 - Burnout initiated by fire management on the Roberts and Wedge Canyon have proven successful to date
- General Cost for fires under Northern Rockies Coordination and acreage total [from Northern Rockies Priorities List -acreage estimate on active fires]:
 - Cost: \$42.8 million Acreage: 107,192**

Web Links:

Glacier National Park Fire Management:

<http://www.nps.gov/glac/resources/fires.htm>

Northern Rockies Interagency Information Center

<http://fs.fed.us/r1/fire/2003fires/index.htm>